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A RADIO DISCUSSION OF

GUNS OR BUTTER?

LEO M. CHERNE
HARRY GIDEONSE
ROBERT NATHAN

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NOTE

The supplementary information contained in the footnotes to the following text, developed by staff research, is not to be considered as representing the opinions of the ROUND TABLE *speakers. Following the transcript of the broadcast are questions which readers may wish to use for analysis and discussion. It is hoped that teachers and discussion leaders may find this additional service of the* ROUND TABLE *transcript helpful in their study of the subject discussed in the broadcast.*

GUNS or BUTTER?

Must National Defense Lower Your Standard of Living?

A UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ROUND TABLE BROADCAST*

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*A radio discussion broadcast from Radio City, New York, over the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company, Sunday, February 16, 1941, at 2:30 P.M., Eastern Standard Time.

The ROUND TABLE, oldest educational program continuously on the air, is broadcast entirely without a script. Subjects are chosen because of their social, political, or economic significance. The program has no "ax to grind." In the selection of speakers, the effort is to provide a balanced discussion by participants who have special competence and knowledge. The opinion of each speaker is his own and in no way involves the responsibility of either the University of Chicago or the National Broadcasting Company.

GUNS or BUTTER?

Must National Defense Lower Your Standard of Living?

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MR. GIDEONSE: I think a lot of Americans are saying, "Here we are, the richest people in the world; we have taught the world mass production; we have just emerged from a ten-year period of mass unemployment, idle resources, and productive capacity; and now when we decide to go in for a large armament program people say we have to choose between one kind of product and another." They want to know, "Why can't we have both, once we have decided we want defense too, if we make the financial sacrifices and appropriate the money?"

MR. NATHAN: We must remember that production results from the application of plant and equipment and man-power; and while ours is the wealthiest nation in the world, and while our national income has been above that of any other country (and many other countries combined) still these productive resources are somewhat limited—particularly in terms of time—because they are set up to produce special products and special services. It takes time to change and expand that productive capacity and to use it for other purposes.

MR. CHERNE: I do not think the average citizen realizes that the minimum shopping list of the army includes 7,300 separate arti-

cles of production, and that there are 200 items—200 pieces of munitions—private industry would not know how to produce today if it were given orders for them; and that there are 1,200 items on which education is needed.

MR. GIDEONSE: In other words, it is not just a question of limited resources, but of the specialized peacetime needs of the economy. When we shift over to a war program we have different specialized wants and needs. That is really where the difficulty arises.

MR. NATHAN: The specialization problem does come in here, but there is also an over-all limiting factor. We are now producing at a rate which will provide about an eighty-billion-dollar national income—that means eighty billions worth of goods and services.[1] There has been a lot of comment as to just exactly how much we might be able to produce—20 or 25 per cent increases have been mentioned—but basically, we have a limiting capacity.

Until we reach that capacity, I would like to operate on the general principle that it would be desirable for us to attempt in every possible way to provide not only for defense needs but also for civilian needs as well.

MR. CHERNE: The problem with which I am immediately concerned is the unwillingness to go ahead with total defense. There is, to a certain extent, an unwillingness on the part of labor; there is, to a certain extent, an unwillingness on the part of industry. There is even, strangely enough, to a certain extent, an unwillingness on the part of those directing the defense program.

MR. NATHAN: Unwillingness to do what?

MR. CHERNE: An unwillingness to recognize the full implications of total defense.

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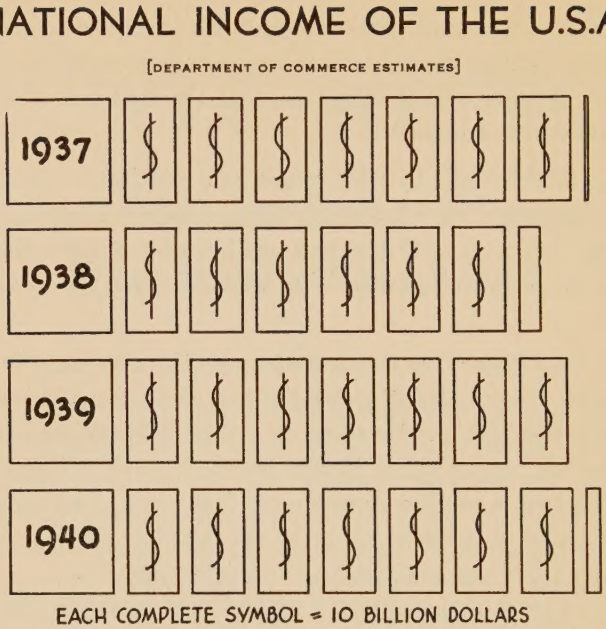
[1] *See illustration on page 4.*



MR. NATHAN: All right—how does that relate to this question of "guns or butter" or "guns *and* butter?"

MR. CHERNE: The manufacturer of adding machines can make automatic pistols; lead pencils come out of the same kind of machinery that is used to make ammunition components; producers of cash registers and business machines can just as easily make bomb fuses; and if the production of electric refrigerators were curtailed, the manufacture of airplane parts could be increased. We have a choice between vacuum cleaners and gas-mask parts. We have a choice between one or the other.

MR. NATHAN: That is quite true, and I think we should definitely make that choice in favor of defense items whenever that

choice is possible. But just because we do have general, over-all productive capacity, and just because that productive capacity is perhaps now primarily concerned with the production of consumer goods, does not mean that that capacity must immediately, and in an over-all way, be shifted to the production of defense purposes.

MR. GIDEONSE: I am still concerned with the difference between being willing to appropriate a large budget for armaments and the opportunity to see that money translated into guns and U-boats and tanks and bombers.

Now I think that the American people are confused about this distinction. They think that once they have made up their mind to vote the money the problem is solved: "we have decided on the sacrifice." But, of course, the experience of Britain and France ought to be a very strong lesson.

MR. CHERNE: I think that lesson is a good one, because in the case of both Britain and France they both appropriated the funds but continued with a policy of "business as usual."[2]

MR. NATHAN: I am not sure that I agree completely. I think they appropriated the funds, but at a late date relative to when they should have done so, and with respect to the time in which they had to adjust themselves. Neither the French nor the British really went after defense when they should have and recognized the problem facing them as fundamental.

MR. CHERNE: Are we?

MR. GIDEONSE: That is exactly what I would like to have

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[2] *For reports on economic mobilization by England, Germany, and France, written while the French were still in the war, see the issues of "Foreign Policy Reports," "Editorial Research Reports," and "The New Republic" listed in the suggested readings on page 21.*

answered. It is easy to be critical of the French and British; I am, and history is, too, because we know what happened last summer. But would you be prepared to argue that we are in a very good position to criticize them in view of the urgency of the need that now faces us?

MR. NATHAN: No. I think that we in the United States are definitely subject to some criticism for not having produced as rapidly and in as large a measure as the seriousness and importance of this situation dictates.[3]

MR. CHERNE: I think the phrase that was born in Czechoslovakia applies to us with greater strength than it did even in the case of Czechoslovakia—"Too little and too late."

MR. GIDEONSE: Yes, and that, of course, is precisely where the distinction General Göring made between guns and butter comes in. We ought to translate it, I suppose, for American purposes. Guns meant war needs to General Göring; and butter meant peacetime consumer needs; so we should say for American purposes, bombing planes or passenger cars; or a limitation of new models in passenger cars; or, perhaps, a decision not to have any passenger cars at all; or no refrigerators at all.

MR. NATHAN: By butter we do not really mean butter, sugar, or coffee. We mean automobiles, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, and all the nice, durable goods that people like to buy.

MR. CHERNE: I think we are all agreed on the desirability of having armaments. I think we are all agreed, also, on the desirabil-

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[3] *For a further discussion of the speed of the defense program, with special emphasis on aviation, see the* ROUND TABLE *broadcast December 15, 1940—"Where Are Those 50,000 Planes?"*

ity of not cutting down our consumer needs—our bread and butter and clothing and shoes—any more than is necessary.

But we face a choice. I would like to state the choice that faces the United States as I see it.

MR. GIDEONSE: Suppose I state it, Cherne, because I understand you and Nathan have some differences of opinion about this, and perhaps the corrections that you may make in the way I state it will bring out these differences.

MR. CHERNE: Fine.

MR. GIDEONSE: Does the situation the United States faces allow enough time to provide additional productive capacity to meet our war needs; or, in other words, leave our peacetime consumers' needs alone; or, is the situation so urgent in time that we must redirect productive capacity (that has up to now been engaged in meeting peacetime needs) to the making of such things as will meet our war needs?

MR. CHERNE: I think that is a fair statement, and I would like to tackle my end of the question. It is based entirely on the foreign policy which was created and is being administered by our government. Roosevelt, Knox, Knudsen, Stimson, and now Willkie, all agree that we must be the arsenal of democracy. They all insist we must speed all implements of defense to England; and most important, they all agree that if this is not done within the next ninety days, or at most six months, the battle may be lost and Hitler master of the slaves of Europe, Africa, and Asia. In other words, our foreign policy implies that if Hitler can be kept from winning in 1941, his chance is gone and the world can be a safe place for free people.[4]

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[4] *For a discussion of this aspect of United States foreign policy, see the* ROUND TABLE *broadcasts: "More Aid to Britain Now?" (January 5, 1941); and, "Is This Our War?" (January 12, 1941).*

Now, if this foreign policy is true—and I am in no position to determine it—I accept it. Then we must produce the munitions this year and not in 1942 or 1943. I agree it would be nice to have perfumes and bayonets, adding machines and automatic pistols, at the same time, but today we haven't the tools, the factories, the skilled labor, and the management to make both. So, first things first. If it is to be a choice between being fat and being free, I like my liberty. I would rather wear one less suit this year than wear a uniform next year.

MR. GIDEONSE: That sounds pretty convincing to me. I cannot see where the differences of opinion come in. Where are they, Nathan?

MR. NATHAN: I want to emphasize that I agree with both of you on "all-out" aid to Britain, and in a very immediate and very substantial defense program for our own country.

But I think that Cherne places a little too much emphasis on the next three or six or nine months in relation to the over-all time involved.

We are now, as I said before, operating somewhat short of capacity. In some industries and for some commodities we have excess capacity. The automobile industry today, despite its high level of operating production, is still running under capacity.

But there are other areas, such as in aluminum and magnesium, and machine tools, where we are short.

I would suggest that we really try to expand our productive facilities in those areas where we are short, so that the whole economy can operate at a much higher level than it is operating today, and try to divert the uses of productive goods into the hands of defense rather than into the hands of civilians.

MR. CHERNE: Here is where I take sharp issue with you. You said I placed too much emphasis on the next three months.

Actually I am not placing any emphasis on the next three months. I am accepting the foreign policy determined by the government. If that foreign policy is not kidding me; if it is not purely for the purpose of either propaganda or steaming the defense machinery into action; if it is true that the next three months are critical, there is no sense in talking about what we will have next year or the year after.

MR. NATHAN: Certainly the next three or six months will be very important, but let me point out that we are not living in a country of miracles, and airplanes and ships and tanks are not going to flow off ways and assembly lines with the snap of somebody's fingers. It is going to take time to adjust and develop our facilities; and by that I do not want to appear to be an apologist for the fact that our defense effort has not moved ahead more rapidly.[5]

In the next three to six months our output of armaments for Britain must be, of necessity, limited; and therefore, to concentrate our policy on the needs of the next three or six months is, I think, going to make for a very difficult situation a year or a year and a half or two years hence when we may be really in such a position.

MR. GIDEONSE: It seems to me that this is only a partial difference of opinion. Cherne is saying the foreign policy of the United States is based on the assumption that we are facing an extremely critical situation before this summer (and I think that probably the greater part of the American people agree with that) and therefore we ought to do everything we can to see to it that we meet those immediate four months' needs.

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[5] *In December, 1940, Defense Commissioner Knudsen said: ". . . . our hoped-for production figures for January 1, 1941, or 1,000 planes per month, have to be scaled down by thirty per cent to be correct." Recently the Air Chamber of Commerce announced that aircraft production should reach 1,500 planes per month by June, 1941.*

Nathan is saying that when we get through that period, on the assumption that Britain is still free and independent, then the problem of liquidating this war is still before us, and the problem, in other words, of 1942 and 1943 must be thought of. From that standpoint we ought to think of the expansion of productive capacity over a period of years.

MR. NATHAN: Let me point out that in Germany today the amount of effort going into the production of armaments is much more like three or four times what we are going to have this coming summer; and that today the occupied countries in Europe are providing Germany with more armaments than we are sending to Great Britain (which may be more or less amazing to the American public).

MR. CHERNE: I think you are only adding strength to the points I have made. We have to accomplish within the next nine months what Germany has taken six years to accomplish.

I agree with you that it takes miracles, but this is the time for miracles if the thing we call democracy is to be saved. That is our foreign policy.

MR. NATHAN: All right, I agree with that.

MR. GIDEONSE: But my dear sir, "miracles"—that sounds a little like wishful thinking and like hoping that prayers will be answered. I am a good Calvinist, and I believe that God helps those who help themselves.

So, if you want miracles, we had better get down to helping ourselves, which means, presumably, that all the one-hundred-thirty-odd million of us will have to think a little differently about the day's work and the day's obligations during the six months ahead. That is what you mean by miracles.

MR. CHERNE: Perhaps I can make a contribution to our way

of thinking if I can illustrate some practical miracles that are capable of accomplishment overnight. Our War Department has, for twenty years, been surveying industrial facilities to determine which factories can manufacture munitions. As a result of that survey, 10,000 plants have been designated for military production. As a result of that survey, those 10,000 plants have been waiting for the signal to produce the machinery for which they already have equipment. Why haven't they been called?[6]

MR. NATHAN: I would like very much to put that question to you. We have, of course, placed orders running into several billions of dollars. Perhaps the magnitude of our program is not big enough. We are thinking in terms of producing something like ten or twelve billion dollars worth of goods in the next fiscal year. That is only about one-seventh or one-eighth of our national income, while Germany is using nearly one-half and Britain is using one-half. I think that gives us some concept of what is ahead when we begin to visualize this thing in terms of total production.[7]

MR. CHERNE: We both agree on the need to expand the scope of our defense program.

MR. NATHAN: I am glad to hear you say that.

MR. CHERNE: Starting with what we have, though, we have the clear alternative—adding machines or automatic pistols. That is the problem today—guns or butter.

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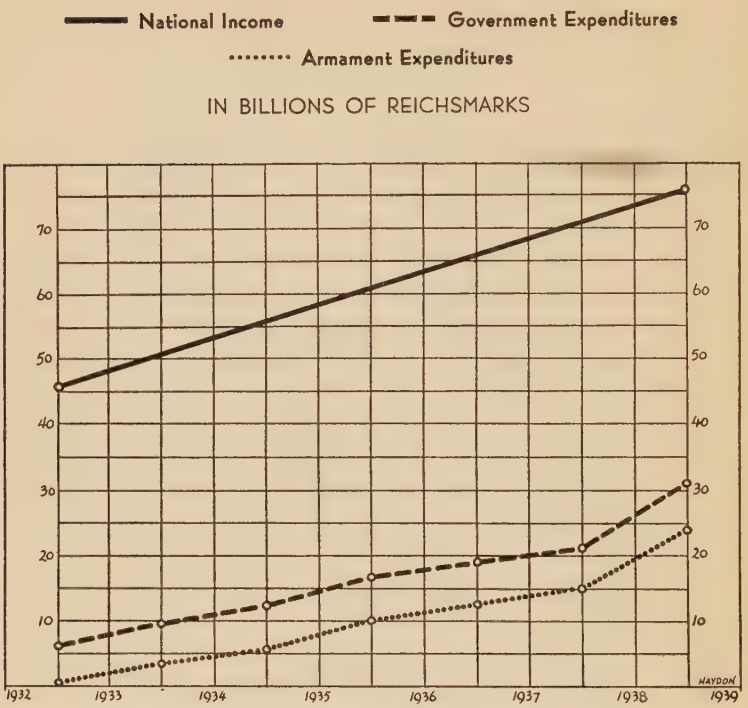
[6] *For a discussion of industrial mobilization, see the* ROUND TABLE *broadcast of July 14, 1940—"M-Day and America." Mr. Cherne was one of the participants.*

[7] *See the illustration on page 12 for a depiction of German arms expenditures compiled from data contained in the article by Charles E. Noyes in "Editorial Research Reports."*



MR. NATHAN: It is not quite that simple. Let me illustrate. Let us say that today you decide you are going to cut out all the civilian uses of a particular raw material—let us say brass. Do you realize what might be involved in that? It does not affect only the products which are made of brass.

MR. CHERNE: You say it is not as simple. I would like to read you a list of conversions that was prepared by the War Department, and which I have never heard questioned by any other group.

They may not be accurate. If they are not, if the Defense Commission knows they are not, then we deserve outright questioning. That list shows that agricultural implements can be made into artillery shells; that lead pencils can be made into ammunition components; that cans and food containers can be made into gas-mask canisters; that lawn-mowers can be made into shrapnel machining; that plumbing can be made into machining for artillery shells; that even radio—the medium over which we are speaking—radios and phonographs could just as easily be bomb fuses and parts. (*See illustration on page 17.*)

MR. GIDEONSE: I would like to have this discussion center a little more on the concrete details of industries that could be converted, if time would permit. These all-over statements about conversion of industries we already have as over against expansion of industrial capacity we do not now have should be taken with a grain of salt.

You mentioned in the list a number of industries that could be converted. That, of course, suggests to me a list of other industries that are probably not in that category. In other words, statements about this problem depend upon facts and circumstances which are going to be different in different industries.

MR. NATHAN: May I emphasize that a little more in a practical sense? I have never seen that list, and I am very much interested in how long you think it would take to convert some of those plants from producing the commodities you mentioned into defense commodities.

MR. CHERNE: Unfortunately I am neither an industrial engineer nor a military expert, and I therefore must rely upon the information given to me in good faith by the agencies of the government concerned with defense. They have told me that in many in-

stances the plant has already been equipped, the tools and dies are in the warehouse, and that they can turn out the converted product overnight.

MR. NATHAN: To get back to fundamentals. I am inclined to agree that if you can turn any plant over to producing some part or finished product for munition purposes, it certainly would be desirable to do that and to do that immediately. But, after all, you know that whatever we do with the conversion of plants between now and June, or between now and September, that the number of airplanes now scheduled will not change very much. I think that statement would be acceptable, don't you, Gideonse?

MR. GIDEONSE: It seems to me, again, that as far as the facts and circumstances allow, you two are agreed. There is some difference of opinion, perhaps, upon the extent to which facts and circumstances allow, but we seem to agree, all three of us, that if we consider the urgency of the situation this country now faces, and may perhaps face three or four months from now, our present program is certainly not an all-out program.

MR. NATHAN: That is right.

MR. CHERNE: That is entirely correct.

MR. NATHAN: In selecting this topic of "Guns or Butter?" certainly the University of Chicago Round Table had these two views in mind—what we should do in the short-term future and what we should do in the long run. I am very glad to hear that Cherne agrees upon this matter of expansion.

MR. CHERNE: That seems to be a surprise to you. It should not be a surprise because, as a matter of fact, I would like to go a little farther than the defense machinery has thus far had the willingness or the ability or the time to go, and say I would like to see the gov-

ernment walk into your shop, Mr. Jones, and say, "Look here—that assembly belt of yours can just as easily turn out gas-mask parts as carpet cleaners; and gas-mask parts are more important to defense." And to the fellow who makes lipstick cases—"You can just as easily make bullet casings." These are conversions that are possible today.

MR. GIDEONSE: In other words, what you are saying again is that we should look at the particular facts and particular circumstances of every industry, instead of talking in large, over-all generalizations.

MR. CHERNE: Right.

MR. GIDEONSE: What interests me about this problem is that if that is the point of view we are going to take, why is it, in view of the urgency of the foreign situation, that we are retarded in this factual, pragmatic consideration of what our problem is? What kind of things are holding us back? What are the factors that are making it so difficult to translate what is politically felt to be an extremely urgent situation into actual business conduct?

MR. NATHAN: There are a number of reasons, perhaps, that anyone can give. You have read a lot of them in the press, and heard them over the radio from your commentators.

It seems to me that one of the difficulties involved is that here we have a real, true operating job, and, prior to the setting up of the Office of Production Management, there was not the tendency on the part of those who were running the show to actually go in and work with the manufacturer and say: "Here are your parts, and you are the manufacturer to produce this particular part."

If that is the type of conversion you are thinking about, I will agree with you; but if you are thinking of going out and saying suddenly, "We are going to cut automobile production in half," or "No

more refrigerators tomorrow"—I would completely disagree with you.

MR. CHERNE: I do not for a minute suggest that you go out and convert for conversion's sake. I do suggest that, at a time when defense material is so urgently needed, it is out of place to have a manufacturer announce that he has just perfected an invention capable of spreading ultra-violet rays through hotel bathrooms to cleanse the rooms for the next patrons of the hotel (when that invention requires one of the best machine-tool plants in the country to manufacture the machines). This is a time we could do without that very nice but unnecessary thing.

MR. GIDEONSE: I think we all agree. Perhaps that manufacturer simply feels he must keep the country aware that he is staying alert to growing consumer needs.

Let's get back to the difficulties that seem to make it hard for our public psychology to translate an emergency in the political area into a willingness economically to see to it that our armament program marches along.

Isn't it true, for instance, that a lot of people are paying too much attention to the post-war situation? They are perhaps forgetful of the fact that if we are to have a post-war situation which we are going to control, we must first see to it that the right side wins.

MR. CHERNE: Let's try to bring this down to earth. I think the problem you are driving at is that the manufacturer is afraid that after the defense boom is over he will be left with empty plant capacity on his hands; and the laborer is afraid that after the defense boom is over he is going to be working fifty or sixty hours a week, and that it will take him a generation to get back to his present standard of forty hours a week. Both groups are apparently unwilling to take the risk.

INDUSTRIAL MOBILIZATION

What War Necessities Selected Peacetime Industries Can Produce

DATA FROM · "THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF AMERICA"

MR. NATHAN: I am afraid that in emphasizing short-term considerations you have overlooked this other long-term thing. You agree with the expansion, but I am afraid you overlook it.

To date we have had a period of some eight or nine months of defense measures since the first appropriation was made.[8] During that period we have anticipated, I think, a certain number of shortages and bottlenecks. Some, but not enough of them, have been corrected. Gideonse has mentioned that some people are concerned with the possibilities of post-war capacity.

I think we must emphasize that we are in for a defense effort and that that defense effort may be very, very substantial. If it is not substantial, I say we'd better get busy now and begin to expand capacity for those particular purposes.

MR. GIDEONSE: What we have to get through our heads is that if this war should end without our effort immediately counting for very much, with say a German victory, then that defense effort becomes even more urgently necessary. In other words, we should abandon the notion that this thinking, and readjustment, and discipline is necessary for only this present, short-run emergency.

MR. CHERNE: I recently had a very interesting conversation with one of the members of the Office of Production Management. Unfortunately, I do not feel free to quote his name, but I believe that the policy he enunciated in his conversation with me is the policy we must adopt. He said that those responsible for defense should not

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[8] *The 1940 Congressional appropriations for defense totaled $12,750,000,000, of which $3,300,000,000 was in regular supply bills for the army and navy, $8,500,000,000 in the first, second, and third supplemental national defense appropriations, and the remainder for special items—draftee housing, a third set of locks for the Panama Canal, etc.*

think either about the post-war problem or about present cost, but about the possibility of getting defense, because dollars cannot buy yesterdays.

MR. NATHAN: That is right.

MR. GIDEONSE: But it is also important—isn't it?—to keep in mind that there are very wide areas in which guns and butter come together for a while in terms of population groups.

MR. NATHAN: Yes. There is no doubt, for instance, that we should not try to cut down on milk consumption or meat consumption, or on other things of that nature today.

MR. CHERNE: Obviously.

MR. NATHAN: Nor on textiles or any other products.

And there is one other thing I want to emphasize. The American people are willing to sacrifice, but I am not so sure that sacrifice just for itself—deprivation—is desirable. It seems to me much more desirable to develop a strong economy which will give us a strong defense, and to build up productive capacity so that when the period comes when we are not spending ten or twelve or fifteen billion for defense, but a hundred billion. . . . .

MR. CHERNE: If we pass the next six months I agree with you entirely. I agree upon the social desirability of expansion, but for the present we must have munitions.

MR. GIDEONSE: We might summarize this discussion by saying that there is no need to curtail consumption in some fields where it would not help in meeting war needs. And there are some areas in which we can have both guns and butter; and there are other areas, probably increasing areas, where conflict exists.

This may call for discipline for consumers, for labor, and for capital, which we have not experienced up to now. And the reason we

are slow is probably that we have only in a speechlike sort of way been convinced of the urgency of the emergency. We have not begun to think it through and to act economically as if we believed it, or to think about it in terms of the effort and time it is going to require.

We must learn that appropriating money is merely the first step, and a pretty unimportant one. Getting the goods produced is the vital step, and getting them produced on time is the heart of the whole argument.

SUGGESTED READINGS

"Democratic Defense," *The New Republic Supplement*, February 17, 1941. *A comprehensive appraisal of United States defense efforts. Contains the following articles:* "What We Must Defend," "The Lesson of British Experience," "We Have Repeated Britain's Mistakes," "Why We Are Falling Behind," "Capacity and Defense," "Labor and Defense," "Prices and Social Policy," "Fiscal Policy," "One-Third of a Nation," "Civil Liberties," and "Our Fight Is Not Lost."

De Wilde, John C., "Germany's Wartime Economy," *Foreign Policy Reports*, June 15, 1940. *How the Third Reich has met the problem of "guns or butter" and how the German people have fared.*

De Wilde, John C., and Monson, George, "Defense Economy of the United States," *Foreign Policy Reports*, November 1 and 15, 1940. *Two brief summaries of the problems of raw-material procurement and the mobilization of industry for defense.*

Goslin, R. C., and Goslin, O. P., "Cannon and Butter," *Scholastic*, January 6, 1941. *A brief statement of the problem of converting peacetime industry to wartime needs, with attention to the effect of such conversion on the American standard of living.*

Popper, David H., and De Wilde, John C., "Wartime Economy of Britain and France," *Foreign Policy Reports*, July 15, 1940. *A description of British mobilization of economic power in the present war.*

Noyes, Charles E., "Economic Controls in Nazi Germany," *Editorial Research Reports* (Washington, D.C.), November 1, 1940. *A brief summary of the techniques used by Nazi Germany to achieve total mobilization for war.*

OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION

The answers to the following questions may be found in the text of the broadcast, and page references are provided to assist in locating the answers.

*

1. The minimum "shopping list" of the army includes how many separate "articles of production"? Pages 2–3.
2. What is the national income (the value of goods and services produced) of the United States? Pages 3–4.
3. List three peacetime industries capable of shifting over to produce war needs. Pages 4, 13, 17.
4. Mr. Cherne bases much of his case upon the necessity of sending large supplies of munitions to Great Britain within what period of time? Page 7.
5. What large mass-production industry is suggested as having excess capacity at present? Name two industries in which shortages are being experienced. Page 8.
6. How does Germany's present war budget compare with the United States' defense appropriations for the coming year? Page 10.
7. How does United States' aid to Great Britain compare with war materials obtained by Germany from the occupied sections of Europe? Page 10.
8. What proportions of the national budgets of the United States, Great Britain, and Germany are devoted to military purposes? Page 11.
9. What specific fears (on the part of labor and industry) concerning post-war conditions may be responsible for delays in defense preparations? Page 16.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following questions of wider scope, intended for discussion, are suggested by the broadcast, and answers may be found in the literature on the subject listed in the section "Suggested Readings," found on page 21.

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1. Analyze the strength of the United States in terms of raw materials, industrial plant and equipment, and labor available for armament production. In what fields do you feel weakness exists, if any?
2. Germany and England have spent, and are spending, huge sums on armaments. What percentage of its national income do you believe the United States should spend on arms? Compare your figure with current expenditures for this purpose.
3. Discuss the possibility that production of certain peacetime commodities may be curtailed to give a green light to defense orders. From your knowledge of conditions in Europe list some of the commodities which would be sacrificed first. Describe ways in which reduced consumption of these goods would aid armament production.
4. Describe specific instances of delay in British and American armament production. (See *The New Republic Supplement*, "Democratic Defense," February 17, 1941.) What measures might be taken to eliminate these circumstances? Discuss.
5. On the basis of the details of industrial mobilization outlined by Mr. Cherne, discuss its implications on the present armament program. Would you deem it advisable to turn the 10,000 plants, classified by the War Department in this plan, over to arms production?

The Listeners' Round Table . . . .

Letters to the ROUND TABLE *frequently contain interesting and illuminating sidelights on the subject matter discussed on the air. These comments are from letters received following the broadcast discussion of "Can the Americas Be Invaded," February 9, 1941.*

*

Critique

Let me congratulate you on the handling of today's ROUND TABLE—"Can the Americas Be Invaded?"

In general, I have felt that the true field of the roundtable technique as developed at Chicago—the three-way discussion—is in developing and exploring the angles of some topic on which the discussers have a broad similarity of viewpoint, however much they may differ on certain aspects of the topic. I have been doubtful of the value of this technique in presenting together, on the same broadcast, persons with diametrically opposed views, because neither may have a chance to develop a consistent or consecutive argument, with the result that the most dogmatic, quick-firing types of statement may be brought to the top.

But the way things were handled today seemed to get over that difficulty quite well. Recognizing from the outset that Williams and Cole would diverge on most basic points, DeVinney tossed out agreed-upon issues and let each one have his say, then went on to another issue. The result was a ROUND TABLE I would rate very high both for audience interest and educational value.

E. S., Massachusetts

*

Crackpot

I am sure that it is necessary to have at least one "crackpot" on your weekly program. You had him yesterday. I think it was Al Williams. His statements were contradictory; his remarks were cowardly; his general demeanor was asinine; his foolish expressions showed dense ignorance, and evidently he was trying to ape Charles Lindbergh.

G. McG., South Carolina

*

Make Democracy Work

I was nothing short of astounded to hear the plans which our armed forces have for the defense of America as recited on the ROUND TABLE.

If confidence in our democracy is so shaky that such unconscionable methods of defense must be resorted

to, to keep this terrible ideology of Naziism from even approaching America, then there is not much remaining to fight for. This is equivalent to saying that the fortitude and doggedness which is characterizing the British could not possibly occur in America. It also implies that our present and potential capacity for defending America on our own continent is so inferior to the Nazi power that it undermines our faith in democracy and makes a hysterical attitude of surrender to the "wave of the future" an absolute corollary. If the leaders of America are adopting such a hysterical attitude toward the Nazi menace, then they must expect a defeatist attitude at home.

On the other hand, if we expect America to turn back this cursed Naziism, we had better do something to make our democracy work at home for the 10,000,000 unemployed, the sharecroppers, the "Okies," the $\frac{1}{3}$ of our nation ill-clothed, ill-housed, and ill-fed,—beside refraining from hysterical and diabolical defense measures such as the breach of respect for the rights of neighboring countries and of nations nominally at peace, which you cited as imminent if Germany is victorious in England.

T. J. M., Wisconsin

*

We Are Provincial

Yesterday was the first time I have listened to your ROUND TABLE discussion with something of chagrin and trepidation, caused perhaps by the fact that I worked for a few years in South America and, although I am not posing as an expert on that enormous country, nonetheless some of its more general characteristics were brought very definitely home to me during that residence. One thing I learned is that they don't particularly like Americans, although they would if they had a chance.

We are so enormously provincial that we show them little respect, and since they are a very sensitive people this enrages them. . . . . The American representative is usually a loud-mouthed go-getter and all too often his business performances are a bit shady. South Americans are prone to be democratic: they like us because we often drive our own cars and know something of what goes on under their hoods; and because we don't hesitate to pick up our own valise if necessary. But when we hoot at everything we see to which we are not accustomed, or yell English in their faces in an effort to make them understand, and are very careless in our advances to their women (whom we very seldom marry), they don't like us. The Germans and Italians on the other hand are liked just because they do meet them on terms of social equality; and if the British do hold themselves apart, they at least know how to behave themselves, and gain the respect of cultured South Americans of whom there are many.

With this background I almost jumped to my radio to shut it off when Major Williams was explaining what we should do in South America in case

of a Nazi victory, as I was terrified lest someone in South America should hear him. The logic of Williams' view was simply that we dictate South America's attitude toward Europe if Hitler becomes dominant; we were to blow his ships out of the water for some obscure reason and obviously the South American nations were to be calmly disregarded. The Nazis in all probability would not attempt to invade South America in a military sense for some years, if at all; but since South America must trade with Central Europe it is evident that with the German genius for ingratiating propaganda plus the fact that any people's interests are where their purse strings are concerned, South America is going to be on very genial terms with Germany. And among the articles which they buy with their raw materials are going to be war materials. Under such a setup it is obvious that we are not going to have anything to do with this purchase; neither are we going to have anything to do with the way it is used. In fact, South America could be pretty well armed and we wouldn't even know it. Once this is accomplished Germany is going to control the setup and we can expect their advice to be taken just as it is taken in Hungary, Austria, and Sweden today. Actual military invasion would probably never be necessary, but there will be war bases all over South America and up in Colombia too; and once this situation is completed there is no force capable of keeping the Panama Canal intact over a long period.

We can't fight Germany for trading peacefully with South America, and we most emphatically cannot dictate to South America regarding its trade relations—which is practically what Major Williams proposed yesterday. If this sort of talk comes to their attention it is enough to get South Americans so excited we will have done more good for Hitler than all our aid to England will do harm. The Colossus of the North would get an airing which would make former exhibitions look puny, and all Mr. Hull's "Good Neighbor" efforts would be forgotten overnight. Whatever people may say about South America in their public discussions, I offer nothing short of a prayer that it will never take this tangent any more.

W. C., California

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A UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ROUND TABLE BROADCAST

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FEBRUARY 23, 1941

●

PETER DRUCKER, Former Financial Editor, *Frankfurter Generalanzeiger*

QUINCY WRIGHT, Professor of International Law, University of Chicago

(THIRD PARTICIPANT TO BE ANNOUNCED)

●

SUGGESTED READINGS

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